

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 02491 220705Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1723
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEHRAN 2491

EXDIS

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, SY, IR
SUBJ: SYRIAN-US RELATIONS

1. FONMIN KHALATBARY DREW ME ASIDE AT THE ANNUAL SALAM CEREMONIES YESTERDAY (MARCH 21) TO TELL ME THAT THE SHAH HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED WORD FROM SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD ASKING FOR THE SHAH'S HELP IN BRINGING SYRIA AND THE US CLOSER TOGETHER. THE REQUEST WAS MADE ON THE BASIS OF ASSAD'S PERCEPTION OF THE CLOSENESS OF US-IRAN AND HIS BELIEF THAT THE SHAH MIGHT BE ABLE TO SPEAK TO US MORE FREELY. KHALATBARY WENT ON TO SAY THAT IRAN SEES ASSAD AS A SERIOUS MAN WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FORCE FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THAT IRAN APPROVES OF THE POLICIES ASSAD HAS BEEN FOLLOWING IN THIS RESPECT. IRAN BELIEVES ASSAD DESERVES THE SUPPORT OF ALL MODERATES IN THE AREA AND THAT IT IS IN THE US INTEREST TO SUPPORT HIM AS WELL.

2. KHALATBARY SAID THAT THE SHAH SENT A MESSAGE BACK TO ASSAD URGING THAT HE SPEAK WITH US DIRECTLY AND THAT WHILE HE (THE SHAH) WOULD TELL US OF ASSAD'S APPROACH, HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT NECESSARY OR DESIREABLE AT THIS POINT TO PLAY AN INTERMEDIARY ROLE.

3. I EXPRESSED SOME SURPRISE AT ASSAD'S INITIATIVE, SAYING
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THAT I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN US AND SYRIA WERE OPEN AND CLEAR. KHALATBARY SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHY ASSAD HAD TAKEN THIS STEP RATHER THAN HE SAW THE US AND IRAN AS CLOSE FRIENDS, BUT THEN WONDERED WHETHER THE SYRIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAD BEEN RECEIVED ON THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL IN THE USG. HE ADDED THAT ASSAD MAY ALSO BE TRYING TO COVER ALL POSSIBILITIES PAVING

THE WAY TOWARD AS CONSTRUCTIVE A MEETING AS POSSIBLE WITH
PRESIDENT CARTER.
MIKLOS

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NNN

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